



Keeping in Touch

Newsletter for New Zealand History Federation Inc

Te Kotahitanga o nga Hitori o Aotearoa

Patron: Robin Astridge QSM

www.nzhistoricalsocieties.org.nz

July 2020

Reopening under Alert Level 1



My sincere thanks to all those who sent me messages of support, and sharing your stories, after my first newsletter to you all in May.

Since then, I've visited Silverdale to visit Sue Healy up at the Pioneer Village in early June. The Silverdale and Districts Historical Society were to have held the Auckland Regional Gathering this year in August, but, you know what happened ... Silverdale though is undaunted, and are happy to host next year's gathering, sometime around August, a date to be confirmed closer to the time.

Then, at the end of the month, I was very kindly invited to the committee meeting for the Franklin Heritage Network, held at Papakura Museum. I couldn't pass up the opportunity of taking some photos from the Museum's war exhibition room (see left), and they are particularly proud of their display of Costar family memorabilia linked in with the First World War,

including pull-out drawers under the main display. But — I was there to talk about Conference 2021 with the members of the Network, and in particular Richard Garvey from Waiuku Museum, the organisation who had already offered to host the conference/AGM next year. Again, dates to be confirmed once Richard and his team have had a chance to check with everyone else in their vicinity also opening up after the lockdown, planning events and happenings, to sort out timing and a programme that will suit as many as possible. All going well, we could be a bit spoiled for choice! I intend heading down to Waiuku myself from sometime in September to take a look around and (hopefully) confer with Richard and the rest at the museum.

Readers will probably have seen their societies receive the reminders from the Registrar of Incorporated Societies (Charitable Trusts may have had the equivalent) about annual reports due as AGM dates roll past due to delays in this reopening period. The Government is quite lenient and understanding regarding the situation — dropping a line to advise them about delayed AGMs doesn't hurt, and it at least keeps everyone informed.

As far as known at the time of writing, planning for the Auckland Heritage Festival is still proceeding, an annual event that is quite important for the Auckland Region members of Federation and so many other heritage organisations. I'm waiting to see any updates on the Festival at the next meeting of the Auckland Council Heritage Advisory Panel (to which I was appointed before the lockdown).

To all of you — all the very best for your own reopenings during this rather “interesting” year.

Lisa J Truttman

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Val Payne's Lockdown Projects

Val from the Mangere Historical Society called me with news of some of the things she had got up to during the lockdown. I invited her to put some of the gems down in writing and to send them through. How could I not? Thanks, Val — editor.

COVID 19. Will we ever forget this name? It affected everyone in so many different ways. It curtailed all our activities, whatever you had planned.

How did you keep active over those long weeks? Some people reported that their cupboards had been sorted, their drawer re-organised, the gardens had been weeded and leaves swept up for the compost, letters that had been awaiting time for you to answer, no longer had an excuse to be put off any longer. What did you do with such a long expanse of days stretching on day after day, week after week? After all there are only so many times you can do what you have already accomplished and now proudly regard as a job well done and no need for any further attention.

I found this extra time with all other activities cancelled to be a real blessing.

One of the ongoing research projects that had stalled, was trying to identify the families that lived in the houses showing on a Whites Aviation Map of early Mangere Bridge. Of course you could only see the roofs. I managed to timeline one of the pictures as between 1945-47, as one of our newer members still lived in the house her parents had built in 1948 in Scott Ave and it was missing from one photo. The second one was acquired from a Chinese friend and son of one of the numerous Market Gardeners who leased Maori land for their use. What a marvellous asset he was to identifying so many blocks of land with a shed only showing long with rows of vegetables.

I had asked everyone that I knew who had lived in the village of Mangere Bridge as they grew up, and they told me the names of their neighbours and friends. In those days there were no numbers on letterboxes. We realised that we really were not able to identify who lived where as some of the people were born after the photos were taken. The answer was to find a Wises Street Directory for this time. Easier said than done. Manukau Reference Library did not have one. Auckland did but would not release it to Manukau. I am handicapped in the distance I can walk and if I caught a bus to the City I could not get to the Library. If they sent it to Manukau, I could drive there and park in a disabled park and walk across the square and into the Manukau Reference Library. Unfortunately it was not to be. Think again. I am not knowledgeable on the workings of computers but another of our Members has helped me previously, so she undertook to try and find what we needed on Google or some such.

We were delighted to get those streets that were around in our Photo area with the names and vocations of the man of the house written in very small print with their job alongside in mostly guessable abbreviations. Well “lbr” was obviously labourer, “grdn” was gardener and we had a lot of them, “rgr” was ranger, “clk” must be clerk, “bdr” was builder, “frr” was furrier but then we had “bcn cur” = bacon curer, “pltfm” became poultry farmer.

“Rdotren” was unguessable and once again my fellow researcher requested help from Alexander Turnbull Library. They did their searching and were able to enlighten us: “rdotren” was retired officer Trentham. How would we ever have guessed this?

“Curr” stood for currier, a worker with leather, “comp” was compositor as in printing. By golly what fun it was identifying these occupations.

Once all this was typed up, I realised that if something else did not come along I would have to start on the housework once more. Not my favourite occupation.

Along came the next challenge. Our local Mangere Bridge Walking group was celebrating an anniversary, but they were not sure if it was 20th or 19th. Those who favoured the 20th were adamant they were right and those for 19th were equally sure. Fortunately one of the members had it recorded in a diary or some such, so that was great.

I realised that someone should perhaps recorded the history of this very wonderful asset to the Bridge. I searched through the phone lists that I still had but could not find anyone that I thought was really likely to undertake the research required. Looked in a mirror and realised that I was probably able and competent, as I knew all those who started back 19 years ago including the man from Counties Manukau Active Living, Derek McKeen, who had been designated to undertake the task of starting walking groups in Papakura, Manurewa, Papatoetoe, Pakuranga and Maraetai. I had started with this fast growing group when I retired from my florist shop. My husband had started months earlier. I realised that in several cases, one person had nursed their husband or wife through years in some cases of ill health. They needed to get out and meet new people and become involved in their local community once more. It became a life saver for these folk.

Many hours of phone calls to all those names that I had recorded, as well as the newer to me, members that had been walking since I was forced to stop about five years earlier, were all happy to contribute their memories and thoughts about what their belonging to this group had done for them, as well as enjoyable places they had been to, that in many cases they did not even know existed. The other very strong comments were that the new friendships formed with strangers, to them when they started walking, had formed great companionship with so many others. It was so nice to go shopping and have people acknowledge them as they met up. The end of the hour's walking was a refreshing visit at the local cafes with coffee or tea. The walkers had automatically split into three categories that I named as fast walkers, walkers and talkers, and natters and chatterers. These days this comprises of those with walking sticks, bad hearts, old age disabilities etc. They still exercise with a much shorter less stressful walk and they arrive back about the same time as the others, for an enjoyable flat white etc. This included a catch up with others who walked in different groups. Those who can no longer walk any distance still turn up to join with their friends, to enjoy the company and the coffee.

I am sure that when the Counties Manukau started this group they never realised just how important it was going to become in so many people's lives. I reckon that probably well over 120-140 people have been influenced by this unassuming group that has become such a wonderful asset to Mangere Bridge village.

www.nzhistoricalsocieties.org.nz

If you have a page on the NZ History Federation website — check it out. Is it up to date? Has your organisation had a change of contact person, opening times, even a location for your meetings?

Or, if you're a Federation member but you don't have a webpage — why not join our site? \$50 + GST one-off charge for new pages, one update per year free.

Contact Kenneth Stringer k.stringer@xtra.co.nz or Lisa Truttman re any updates or for more info as to pages.

Some news from Franklin District

Pukekohe Railway Station

The campaign continues to get Auckland Transport and others to recognise the importance of retaining the old railway station building at least somewhere at the station site. The welcome extension of electrification means that the station will have to be moved, but the Franklin Historical Society and Friends of the Pukekohe Railway Station are trying to present planners with location options.



Tuakau — why can't trains stop there as well?

You may have seen the news of the coming inauguration of the Auckland-Hamilton commuter rail service which has been on the drawing board now for a couple of years at least. This month, the Tuakau community launched an online petition to try to get passenger services, closed in 1983, reopened again with the new service. Along with an extension of the electrification that is planned to link Pukekohe with the rest of Auckland region, to Tuakau.

www.change.org/p/hon-shane-jones-of-new-zealand-first-help-support-the-tuakau-railway-station-and-rail-service

Image from the Change.org petition page.

Awhitu Historical Society

I was asked to share the following — editor.

[The society] met on Tuesday 23 June for the first time since March and have documented the event of the Covid 19 Virus and its effects. Julie shared an article about a parallel situation in our history which may be of interest:

“Robert Makgill, a decorated lieutenant colonel in World War I, was the equivalent of director-general of health Dr Ashley Bloomfield during the deadly 1918 influenza epidemic. Heritage New Zealand uncovered Makgill's story during a recent heritage inventory of war memorials, the organisation's director of regional services Pam Bain said. Makgill was best known for making the highly unpopular decision to close bars, breweries, and wine and spirits merchants in Wellington during the flu epidemic, which struck in the closing weeks of the war. 'It's hard to overstate the impact the flu epidemic had on the country. About 18,000

New Zealand soldiers had died during the four years of World War I. The flu epidemic, however, killed 8600 people – just under half the number of war dead – in less than two months.’ Robert Makgill’s professional reputation grew in New Zealand for his careful testing and quarantine methods. He argued for a new public health act to consolidate and simplify existing legislation, becoming the chief architect of the 1920 Public Health Act.”

[<https://www.stuff.co.nz/national/121256311/coronavirus-wwi-soldier-was-the-ashley-bloomfield-of-1918-influenza-epidemic>]

Robert Makgill grew up at Taurangaruru and attended the school at Karioitahi. He is the Great Uncle of Julie’s husband David Williams and of member Fiona MacDonald.

This was Julie’s last meeting and Wayne expressed grateful thanks for her years as a member and as Secretary and for her extensive contribution to the community. Flowers and a present were given.

Rangiriri Heritage Café

Most of the building is now empty. Christine Madsen is looking after the Museum collection. She found that the 94th regiment had visited in 2018 and left photos that she had not seen previously. Visitors are still welcome by appointment.

Other Areas

Okato and District Historical Society are gearing up for Taranaki’s coming Heritage Month in October, along with Heritage Taranaki, Puke Ariki and others.

In Avondale, months of emails phone calls from the **Avondale-Waterview Historical Society** to Auckland Council resulted, once the alert level dropped to 3, in the restoration of a vandalised headstone at the small St Ninians cemetery. Maggie Franklin was born in Glasgow in 1874, the daughter of George Booklass and Annie Harrison Hope. The Booklass family emigrated to Wellington in 1875, then travelled to Australia.

Maggie met her husband Alfred Edward Franklin there, and journeyed back to New Zealand with him, settling in Avondale around 1905. They lived somewhere on the "Methuen Hamlet", one of the early workman's settlements established in Avondale in the early 1900s. Their son Frank Gordon Franklin was born in Avondale. Sadly, Maggie died suddenly in 1910, aged just 36, from “asthma” and “cardiac insufficiency”, lasting just one day. Her husband Alfred Franklin took the family back to Australia, never to return.

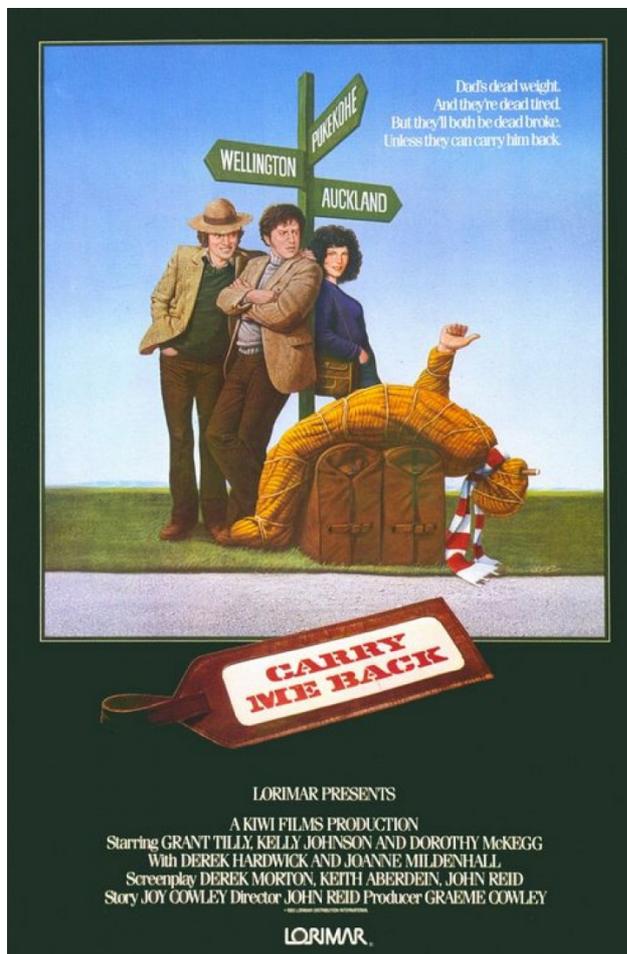
Your editor, as President of AWHS and the one who kept nudging Council, including posting a Facebook thread on the issue of the headstone’s damage, was asked by the author of a promo piece later published in *Our Auckland* about the restoration “Was Maggie famous or notable?” as an angle for writing the story. I replied: “History isn’t just about the famous, the notable - it’s also about the ordinary lives, those who came to a place, lived day by day, sent their children to school and baked their bread. Then, sadly, died far too early, and left behind simply a stone in a graveyard to remind anyone they were ever there.”

It isn’t just the famous and the well-known who matter.

*An invitation from Avondale-Waterview Historical Society
to other members of the NZ History Federation
in the Auckland area*

**Movie and Lunch at Ryders Cinema, 177 Riversdale Road,
Avondale
1 September 2020, 10.00 am**

Carry Me Back (1982)



Two farm boys set out to smuggle their father's body back to the family farm so they can claim their inheritance. When Arthur and Jimmy Donovan persuade their father to leave the farm for the first time in seven years and join them in a trip to Wellington and a Shield challenge by the local team, they just don't know what they are letting themselves in for.

At first things go well, and after crossing the Straits the threesome join their mates at the game and watch Marlborough lift their mates at the game and watch Marlborough lift the shield from Wellington. During the celebrations that are held after the game 'T.K.' makes his own way home and the two boys find him asleep when they return, a little worse for wear, after their night on the town.

The next morning Arthur and Jimmy find to their horror that the old boy has died and that his will specifies that he must be buried on his farm if they are to inherit the farm. Their concern turns to desperation when they realise that county law states that to be buried on the farm their father must die on the property. In short, they will have to carry him back...secretly!

Admittance: \$30

Sorry, no cheques.

You can deposit into the Avondale-Waterview Society's bank account:

Kiwibank 38 9000 0177261 00

or cash on the day

Make sure your name is noted, and contact Alison Turner for booking BEFORE 20 AUGUST 2020.

Phone (09) 825-0300